

Thursday, November 23, 1950

DUXBURY CLIPPER

## Duxbury Rural & Historical Society, Inc.

By HERBERT E. WALKER

Our Society was started at a meeting held at the residence of the Rev. Rushdon D. Burr on what is now called St. George Street on November 13, 1883. The first President was Laurence Bradford, father of our esteemed member, Gershom Bradford. Stephen N. Gifford, the first Vice-president, was the father of our Treasurer.

### Original Purpose

At the beginning, the Society's work was that of a Village Improvement Society. It is said that there is but one Village Improvement Society in Massachusetts which dates back as far as we do: the Laurel Hill Association of Stockbridge, founded in 1858. Many of the trees which line our streets were planted by the Rural Society. Street lamps were erected, watering troughs maintained and unsightly places cleaned up. The Duxbury Rural Society was incorporated February 19, 1916 and in that year Clara Smith Ripley (Mrs. Charles) gave the Historical Building and an extra lot of land to the Society. The name was changed on November 17, 1936 to the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society, Inc.

Mr. Chester Winthrop Bates has continued with us in the upstairs apartment of the Historical Rooms and, although the rent is low, it is a great comfort to have such good tenants who take care of the grounds and do things about the building. Difficulty with the drainage this spring necessitated laying an overflow pipe from the cesspool southerly about 50 feet with orange pipe with a catch basin at the end. This cost \$60. and about \$75. additional have been spent for a new kitchen ceiling and other repairs.

The good work of the two Garden Clubs of Duxbury on both sides of Washington Street at the Cable Office corner has been continued through the year and it is of great importance to our town to have the entrance to our main street so well cared for. This work is done by these clubs without expense to the Society and we are very appreciative.

The gift of \$300 from Mr. Ellis W. Brewster of Plymouth towards the maintenance of the Elder Brewster site was gratefully received. We have paid Mr. Eben H. Ellison the \$300 which he generously loaned the Society without interest for the purchase of the Elder Brewster site. The matter of improvement of the site is under discussion. A sign with the words "Elder Brewster Liliacs" marks the spot. The question of excavating at the site for relics dating back to Brewster's time is also under discussion and the Plymouth people have offered to pay the cost of such excavation and divide any relics found between Plymouth and our Society. They say they would leave the site in good condition. The Elder's Liliacs site became part of the property of Marshall Soule. Buildings at this location on a plan made by John S. Loring dated in 1871 and recorded in Plymouth Registry. Miss Mary N. Gifford, our Treasurer, says that Miss Elizabeth S. Sampson who died February 3, 1937 at the age of 94 years used to tell her about visiting her uncle, Marshall Soule, who lived on the Elder Brewster site. I have seen these buildings when on visits to my relatives when a small boy. The dug well can still be found among the liliacs. Two meetings of the Executive Committee have been held at the site and the opinion reflected by these meetings is that the Society should undertake to put a post and rail fence to delineate the front boundaries of the site.

Gifts gratefully received by the Society during the past year in addition to the gift from Mr. Brewster include from Rev. Herman F. Lion on October 5, 1949, 8 Chinese figures in miniature in beautiful native fabrics given by Mr. Lion's sister; from Mr. Eben H. Ellison a fireman's helmet

worn by his grandfather, William Ellison, who died in 1857 and who was head of the Duxbury Fire Department 100 years ago. The helmet is marked "Ward 2"; from Elizabeth B. Hartshorn (Mrs. William N.) a painting of Partridge Academy; from Mrs. Frank A. Day of Newton a memorandum book of William Ellison of auction at Alden Weston's on September 28, 1856; from Mr. Gershom Bradford of Duxbury, various bills accounts of Capt. Gershom Bradford, 1774-1844; from Miss Grace L. Waterman (formerly loaned) a portrait of Benjamin Franklin, Esq.; from Edith G. Downs of Wollaston and Brant Rock, a photograph of Ford's Store; from Edith T. Sears a booklet written by Frank Ellison entitled "Trip to Duxbury."

### A REMINDER

Please fill in your adult education questionnaire and send it to Mr. Phillip Chandler, so the committee can get started.

## War Adventure

Dr. Barbara Stimson, who recently spent two days with her sister, Mrs. Elbert A. Harvey of Surplus St. is an orthopedic surgeon practicing in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. One of her adventures was most exciting.

During the war, she was on the staff of the Presbyterian Hospital in the New York Medical Center. Learning the American Army would assign women doctors only to care for Wacs and Waves, she volunteered in the British Army and served as a Major until war's end. She performed operations on war casualties for four years in London, Africa and Italy. Among those she operated on were Winston Churchill's son Randolph and the celebrated Popsky.

Popsky was one of the most picturesque and hush-hush characters of the war. The son of Russian and Belgian parents, he chose England as his country. In Egypt before the war he had learned navigation as a hobby so he could explore the desert alone by car. It proved useful when the British made him a general in Popsky's Private Army, an organization formed to operate by jeep behind enemy lines: His army had as few as five—never more than 30 members. All were highly intelligent daredevils who blew up ammunition dumps and bridges, freed prisoners, made hit and run raids and furnished information by radio to headquarters. Their uniform was plain khaki with no insignia except P.P.A. on the sleeve. They functioned successfully in Africa, Sicily, Italy and Jugoslavia.

Wounded late in the war, Popsky came to Dr. Stimson for repair of a shattered hand. He also needed an artificial hand to replace the one that had been shot off. Dr. Stimson has a beautiful cigarette case Popsky gave her. In his thrilling book on his war experiences he paid high tribute to her.

**CAPTAIN'S WALK**  
ON THE WAY TO THE MONUMENT  
DUXBURY 663  
**YARNS**  
CHRISTMAS CARDS

### AUTUMN MOONLIGHT

By Allison Arnold

Up in the dense black velvet of the sky  
The harvest moon slips from the ocean's rim,  
So round and golden as it climbs on high  
That all the stars seem suddenly to dim  
Their brilliance in its warm and glowing light.  
An orange lantern in the dark night sky,  
It turns to silver where the gold was bright,  
And as the high winds softly stir and sigh,  
The radiance etches clearly each bare tree  
In lacy patterns on the silver grass,  
And lends a sense of unreality  
As if the magic night must never pass,  
And that there never should be found a way  
To merge the moon into a dawning day.

### THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Henry Cragin Walker

Tucked away in my attic I found my mother's scrap book containing clippings and verses which she treasured until her death. Among them were the following, which I am sure many oldsters will recall:  
"I know not where Thine Islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care."  
—Whittier.

Another of her treasures was one I often heard her quote:  
"Build a little fence of trust around today,  
Fence it in with loving words  
And therein stay;  
Look not through the sheltering bars upon tomorrow;  
God will bring what e'er is best, of joy or sorrow."

Here is one scribbled in an ancient autograph album, bound in faded blue plush with a small mirror set in the centre:  
"Though oceans may between us roll  
And distant be our lot  
And if on earth we meet no more,  
Dear friend forget me not."  
Also this one:  
"May your virtues ever spread,  
Like butter on hot ginger-bread."  
Here is a verse written on the fly leaf of one of Trollope's novels:  
"If there should be another flood,  
For refuge hither fly,  
Though all the world should be submerged,  
This book would still be dry."

Many people derived much comfort from such verses as these, written on a scrap of paper:  
"If you cannot on the ocean  
Sail among the swiftest fleet,  
Bounding o'er the foaming billows,  
Laughing at the storms you meet;  
You can go among the sailors  
Anchored safe within the bay,  
You can lend a hand to help them  
As they launch their ships away."  
And speaking of ships, here is a heartening epitaph carved on a tombstone of a shipwrecked sailor on the Brittany coast:  
"A shipwrecked sailor buried on this spot  
Bids you set sail;  
Full many a gallant ship when he was lost  
Weathered the gale."  
Many of the verses from long ago poets were pasted in mother's scrap book; here are some lines from Tennyson:  
"Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood."  
This is another by the same author:  
"Pray for my soul;  
More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of."  
These are all simple, homespun verses, and reading one each day often brings hope and comfort.

In many English homes a special Yule cake is baked, and a candle placed on it for each member of the family.